

September 30, 2010



## Planning Department Newsletter

### COUNCIL DENIES COLLEGE HILL REZONE PROPOSAL

#### Inside this issue:

*Keeping Intersections Safe* 2

*The Harvest Drive* 3

*Median Explained*

*Pending Land Use* 4

*Proposals*

On September 14, the City Council decided, in 6-1 vote, to deny a proposed zone change for the College Hill Historic District and adjacent parcels. This proposal, consideration of which was prompted by a strategy in the city's College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan, involved an amendment from R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential and R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential to RT Residential Transitional, which would have reduced allowable housing density for 29 acres of property centered around the intersection of Monroe and Michigan Streets.

The Planning Commission conducted its public hearing on this matter over the course of three meetings on April 28, May 26, and June 23, 2010. At its hearing, the Commission received substantial input from parties on both sides of the issue. It accepted oral comments from 33 people, and admitted

43 exhibits. After reviewing all of the information presented, the Commission voted 6-1 to recommend denial of the request.

At its meeting of September 14, the Council held a public hearing to obtain additional citizen input on the matter. Five individuals spoke at this hearing—two in favor of the proposal and three opposed. The Council also received two written communications from members of the public; the authors of both of those documents expressed objections to the request.

During its deliberations, Council members discussed the possibility of a collective field trip to observe the affected properties with guidance from city staff before making a determination on the matter. However, a majority of the Council decided to act on the proposal immediately. The Council's vote means that the existing R2 and R4 zoning for the area was retained.

In related news, city staff continues to address the other strategies contained in the College Hill Core Neighborhood Plan, such as the creation of design standards for new construction, delivery of a College Hill welcoming pamphlet to residents in the area, and resolution of solid waste and recycling collection issues. Look to future editions of this newsletter for updates regarding these pursuits.



Homes located within the College Hill Historic District.

## KEEPING INTERSECTIONS SAFE

Given the increase in the number of reports we've received recently regarding obstacles impeding visibility at intersections, the planning department felt it was beneficial for public safety to explain the regulations concerning vision clearance areas. Vision clearance areas provide for increased visibility along intersecting streets, permitting people to see oncoming traffic to their right or left, which helps minimize the chances for collisions.

To understand the concept of the vision clearance area, picture a triangle of property where two streets, a street and an alley, or a street and a railroad meet. In order to find this triangle on your property, measure from the corner of the curb (if the corner is rounded, follow the curb lines of the intersecting streets and measure from where these lines would connect) back along the curb. Repeat for the flanking right-of-way. If the street which is being assessed has no stop or yield sign, measure 45 feet. If there is such signage, measure 30 feet (see the accompanying illustration). If you're gauging this distance in an alley, the length needed is 15 feet. If the rights-of-way intersect at an angle less than 30 degrees, these distances would increase by ten feet. Always remember to take appropriate safety precautions when undertaking an activity that requires remaining in an active right-of-way for any period of time.

Once you have marked out your curbs, picture a line connecting these last two points. This imaginary triangle is considered the vision clearance area. Within the vision clearance area, no structure, landscaping, or fence is allowed between the heights of three feet and eight feet, as measured from the level of the adjacent roadway, with the exception of:

- Street signs
- Traffic signs
- Utility poles and boxes
- Retaining walls
- Buildings constructed prior to July 1, 1991
- Tree trunks, if the city planner determines that sufficient visibility is maintained for vehicle and pedestrian safety

The vision clearance area regulations pertain primarily to residential areas. Properties in the C2, C3, I1 or I2 zoning districts are exempt from these requirements.

The planning department requests that you be mindful of these regulations in your ongoing property maintenance activities. If you have any questions, or would like further clarification of these zoning code provisions, please contact the planning department.



*Measuring the vision clearance area*



## THE HARVEST DRIVE MEDIAN EXPLAINED

The most frequently asked question of the planning department over the past month is "What is the purpose of that concrete median on Harvest Drive near Bishop Boulevard?" This median was installed because of construction of the Walmart Supercenter, as explained below.



The newly constructed median at Harvest Drive.

Following Walmart's initial submittal of plans for the Supercenter project in 2004, the city required the company to prepare a traffic study to analyze the impacts of the proposed store on traffic in the vicinity. As this study was being assembled, the city and Walmart heard from citizens in the Harvest Drive residential area that the construction of the store would likely add vehicular traffic in their neighborhood. These citizens expressed concern about reduced safety near their homes as a result of these extra vehicles passing through. The traffic study recognized these concerns and suggested the construction of a median in Harvest Drive to dissuade motorists from using the street as a route between the Walmart Supercenter and destinations north of the neighborhood. The Environmental Checklist submitted by Walmart in 2005 affirmed the potential impact that was noted in the traffic study and offered the following mitigation measure:

Construct traffic calming improvements on Harvest Dr., specifically a raised median on Harvest Drive from Bishop Boulevard to 50' north of Bishop Boulevard plus signage intended to discourage traffic on Harvest Drive.

The city's Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS) regarding the environmental impacts of the project was issued in August of 2005. This DNS accepted all mitigation measures offered by Walmart as a means of reducing the impacts of the development. Some of these measures were expanded as a result of the subsequent appeal proceedings, but none of them were reduced in scope. So, that is why the median, with appropriate signage, has been installed in Harvest Drive.



## Pending Land Use Proposals

Displayed below are land use applications submitted to the planning or public works department or city-generated proposals for planning provisions that require a public meeting, public notice, or site plan review in accordance with the city code.

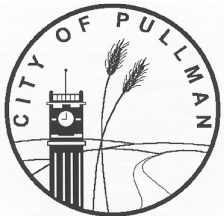
PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	STATUS
Certified Local Government Program	establish historic preservation program for community	Citywide	CC requested ordinance revisions on 1/20/09; ad hoc committee met on 2/9/09 to address ordinance revisions; CC review of draft ordinance scheduled for 10/26
College Hill Architectural Design Standards	formulate design standards for new construction	College Hill Core	PC public forum held 7/28; PC meeting to set direction held 9/22; staff preparing draft standards
Old Wawawai Road Rezone (Z-10-4)	rezone five acres from C3 to R2	southwest corner of SW Old Wawawai Road and SW Effie Drive	PC recommended denial of rezone on 9/22; CC meeting scheduled for 10/26
WSU North Fairway Road Rezone (Z-10-5)	rezone 7.5 acres from WSU to C3	north side of North Fairway Road, east of NE Orchard Drive	PC hearing scheduled for 10/6
Mader North Annexation	annex 506 acres to city	north of Military Hill between Palouse Highway and Brayton Road	PC recommended approval on 7/28; CC accepted proposal at meeting of 8/24; city awaiting formal petition
Johnson Avenue Storage Lot site plan (09-10)	construct 360-sq-ft carport and conduct grading on 4.9-acre site	1222 SE Johnson Avenue	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Hilltop Inn Addition site plan (10-7)	demolish Hilltop Restaurant and construct 54-room addition to existing motel	928 NW Olsen Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
City Equipment Shop Expansion site plan (10-8)	renovate and expand shop by 10,250 square feet at city maintenance grounds	725 NW Guy Street	staff requested applicant to revise site plan
Chen Townhouse Development site plan revision (09-6)	add 16-ft by 20-ft parking area east of building	705-709 NE Michigan Street	staff reviewing proposed site plan revision
Hospital Parking Expansion site plan (10-9)	establish 35 parking spaces south of hospital facility	835 SE Bishop Boulevard	staff reviewing site plan application

KEY TO ZONING DISTRICTS: R1 Single Family Residential; RT Residential Transitional; R2 Low Density Multi-Family Residential; R3 Medium Density Multi-Family Residential; R4 High Density Multi-Family Residential; C1 Neighborhood Commercial; C2 Central Business District; C3 General Commercial; I1 Light Industrial; I2 Heavy Industrial; IRP Industrial Research Park; WSU Washington State University

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS: CC: City Council; PC: Planning Commission; BOA: Board of Adjustment; DOE: State Department of Ecology; LC: Landmarks Commission

NOTES: 1) If an applicant fails to act on a pending application for a period of six months, said application will be dropped from the above list.. 2) Numbers in parentheses are planning staff's internal file numbers. 3) Site plan review by city staff is generally conducted for proposed construction of developments other than single family homes, duplexes, or manufactured homes; it does not apply to most construction on the WSU campus.





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